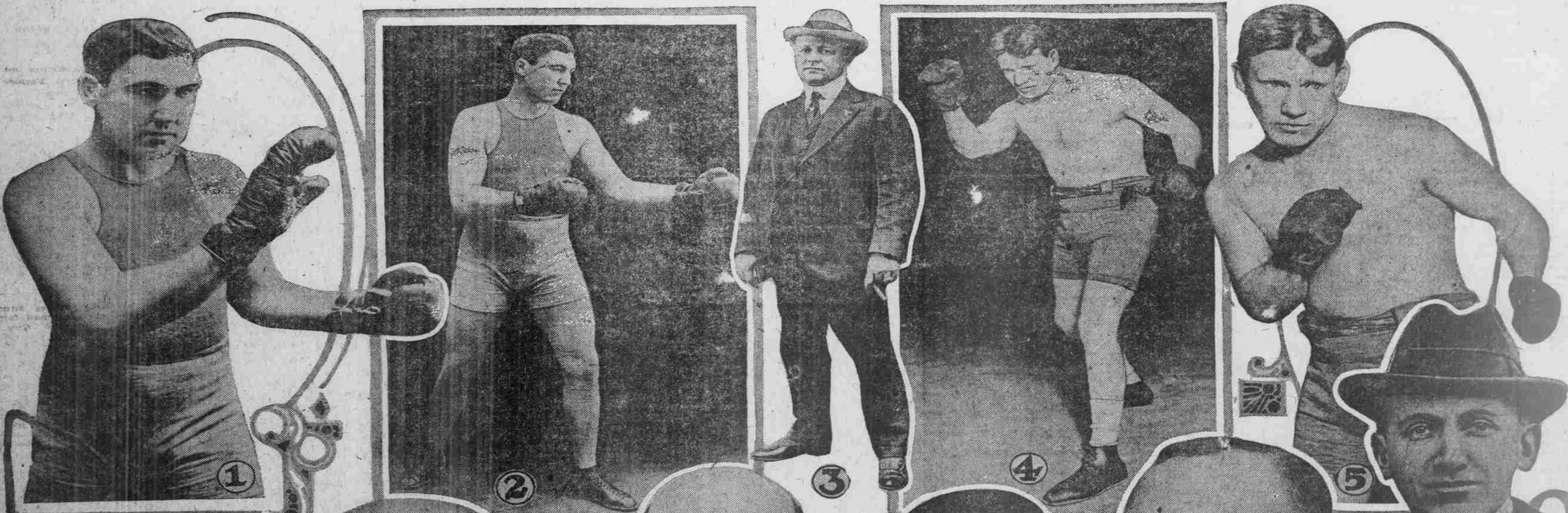


PICKED UP ON THE SPORTING FIELD

Eyes of the Sporting World Centered on Willard-Moran Fight



Photos by American Press Association.

1.—Willard ready to lead. 2.—Fighting attitude of Willard. 3.—Tom Jones, Willard's manager. 4.—Moran ready to let one go. 5.—Moran in fighting attitude. 6.—Sam McCracken, Rickard's assistant. 7.—Referee Charley White. 8.—Promoter Tex Rickard. 9.—Jack Curley, assistant manager of Willard. 10.—Ike Dorgan, Moran's manager.

By TOMMY CLARK.

THE eyes of the sporting world are now centered on the coming ten round mass between Jess Willard and Frank Moran to be held in Madison Square Garden on the evening of March 25. The coming battle has attracted more attention than any other bout since the Jeffries-Johnson affair in Reno, Nev., July 4, 1910. This is not alone due to the importance of the battle, but the fact that Tex Rickard, who astounded the sporting world when he offered over \$100,000 for the Jeffries-Johnson mill, again stunned flaccid circles by giving \$70,000 to Willard and Moran for their services in a ten round bout. It might also be well to mention that the purse for the Reno battle was a record breaker.

Like the Jeffries-Johnson bout, there is much speculation on the coming battle being a money maker for Rickard. By the time the men enter the ring, staging the bout will have cost Tex over \$100,000. Rickard is optimistic and states that he will pull out a winner by about \$35,000.

Picking a winner in the coming mill is a hard proposition as no decisions are rendered in New York. Unless there is a knockout betting men will leave the selection to experts.

At the present writing Willard is ruling favorite at the odds of 2 to 1. This is due to the fact that the champion has so many advantages over the sandy haired Pittsburgh scrapper. He tops Moran in height, weight and reach. They are nearly of equal age, Moran having been born on March 18, 1887, and Willard on Dec. 23 of the same year. Willard, when he enters the ring, will tower full five inches over his opponent, who measures six feet one inch, and as to weight Moran will have to concede at least forty pounds. He generally enters the ring weighing a couple of pounds over the 200 mark, while Willard in all likelihood will not be very much under 250 pounds after training.

Willard's enormous reach of eighty-three and one-half inches, as compared with Moran's seventy-eight is a handicap which the Pittsburgher will have to overcome in order to have a chance of outpointing his big adversary. That Moran is the possessor of courage, stamina and a punch sufficiently effective for a knockout has been demonstrated in several of his ring battles. Moran has been anxious to meet Willard ever since the latter won the championship from Jack Johnson, nearly a year ago, and basing his chances on the showing he made against Johnson in Paris in 1914, Moran believes he has the ability and force to wear down Willard, even in a limited bout of ten rounds.

Willard will make every effort with in his power to knock out Moran. Ten rounds is a short bout in which to accomplish this task, but Willard expresses his confidence in being able to do it. A victory is necessary for the fortune of the house of Willard. His circus contract stipulates that he must win.

However, there will be two men in that ring March 25. Besides Willard there will be a 200 pounder who owns a knockout punch and an iceberg disposition, who not long since knocked loose from his understanding a fighter who had been figured Willard's most dangerous rival—Jim Coffey, a heavy weight of proved gameness and endurance. Moran's task will be to make it a fight. Can he do it?

Accounts of his battles indicate he is a slow, deliberate workman, not very aggressive, preferring to catch the other man coming to him rather than to carry the milling to him. However, working against a man of the Willard type, Moran may appear fast. In fact, if he is to gain anything from his chance, other than the \$22,500 offered him by the promoters, he will have to force his way through that seemingly impenetrable defense of Willard's and fight his way to the jaw and body.

If Moran does not make this attempt it will be the cheese championship fight of the world. Only those who have seen in conflict two slow leviathans, neither one willing to set the pace and both playing safety first, will be able to appreciate what an awful looking thing a heavyweight contest can be. It being the great opportunity of Moran's career, it is almost certain that he will go after Willard to the best of his ability, which will make it a fight. How much of a one will depend entirely on the use Willard can make of his six inch advantage in height, five and one-half inches in reach and fifty pounds or more of bulk. One would think that all Willard need do to keep an unclever man like Moran at bay would be to lean forward and extend his left arm.

Tommy Ryan taught Jeffries this system and made him win a championship with it. It does not seem possible that Moran could effectively get past this Gibraltar if Jess hid behind it for ten rounds. But you can't tell. The unexpected would happen if Willard should develop fighting tendencies and open up from the start with the intention of stopping Moran.

There is no doubt but that both men will go into it for all they are worth, as they will not dare attempt to simply box through ten rounds. It would ruin Willard as a drawing card during his tour with the wild west show, and it would put an end to Moran as a high class heavyweight.

Moran has been studying his game and doing out how he can defeat him. He says he doesn't care how big Willard is or how big a fighter is, as he will bring him down to his size. His method of reducing the altitude of his opponents is a well placed wallop in the bread basket. Moran is coolly confident, according to his own say so, that he can land snidepunches of big Jess and bring his towering head down to an easy reaching distance. This is perfectly logical, provided Willard stands still and permits Frank to execute his plans.

Jess, however, has some ideas of his own about defending his person. Willard has taken the hardest punches anybody could hand out without showing any grave effects therefrom. He took the hardest blows Jack Johnson possessed without even being flustered, used his height and weight combination to lean upon the colored fighter and wear him out and emerged from the battle fresh and unfazed.

Willard, who is six feet seven inches in height, will have an advantage of six inches over Moran, who is six feet one. Willard's style of boxing finds him standing head erect and thrown slightly back. Moran's style finds him with left hand extended, left shoulder protecting his jaw and crouched. It is apparent the difference of six inches in height is thus materially increased. Is it logical to assume, then, that Moran will elect to direct his aggressive against Willard's at the outset any more than it is surmises that Jess will concentrate his early and long range efforts at Frank's body?

The physiques of the men, accentuated by their styles of boxing, decree that Moran shall devote his initial attacks against Willard's body and that Willard center his assaults in the beginning on Moran's head and jaw.

Campaigns of attack and defense can be but preliminary in nature at best. They can be prepared to cover only a limited period measuring the first few rounds. Thereafter everything, each move, is governed by effect. Moran's deficiency in height demands that he not waste his strength by persistently leading up at Willard's head, but that he work on Jess' body with the primary idea of compelling Willard to crouch to protect his body and thus lower his jaw and possibly open it to what may prove a vital attack. Possibly Moran's attack on Willard's body will prove sufficiently vicious and strong to be vital in itself.

Knowing that he must first fight at Willard's body, Moran will prepare himself by perfecting his punching along these lines, endeavoring at the same time to develop an impenetrable defense for his head and jaw.

Willard, equally wide awake to existing physical conditions, has worked to perfect his jabs, hooks and uppercuts, at the same time devoting much thought and time to the careful grooming of his body to withstand a determined and powerful punching.

Those are the programs to be followed by champion and challenger. They are subject to any and all changes dictated by effect, as all such campaigns must be. The coming battle will be Moran's second chance at the championship crown. His previous opportunity was in 1914 when he battled Jack Johnson for twenty rounds in Paris and lost the decision on points. There were many accusations and much scandal over this battle, but whether there was real ground for it or not Moran succeeded in remaining the twenty rounds with Johnson and emerging undamaged.

Since that battle Moran has made good impressively, the record book showing four successive knockouts in his last four battles. Last March he knocked out Bombardier Wells in London in ten rounds, but every good heavyweight does that. In July he disposed of George Sims in London by the sleep route in six rounds, and last October he snuffed out the hopes of Jim Coffey in three rounds, and recently again sent Coffey to dreamland.

In his less important battles he has a steady and consistent record of knocking out his men, so Willard has no easy mark before him. Moran also has proved that he can stand the raff and assimilate a lot of punishment.

Moran's bout with Johnson compares favorably with the first twenty rounds of the Willard-Johnson battle. Johnson outfought Willard in the first twenty rounds, but he was unmistakably much better form than against Moran in Paris. This puts their showing against the former champion on a par. Moran, who has twice stopped Jim Coffey, proved in both these bouts that he was the man of the hour and proved that he was one of the most cool headed fighters in the ring today. He carries a heavy punch in either hand, and while not clever, his ring generalship should prove a valuable asset.

As to whether Willard's great advantages will enable him to put the K. O. on Moran can be answered correctly on March 25, but the writer is of the opinion that if Willard uses his strength, weight and reach and becomes aggressive he should put the K. O. on Moran inside of eight rounds. By this manner he would carry Moran off his feet and tire him out in a short time. On the other hand, if Willard intends to be satisfied with jabbing and an occasional hook the red haired Pittsburgh fighter will get him with heart blows as he did Jim Coffey.

Willard says he'll knock Moran out.

"I am going to make this fight as short as possible," says Champion Jess Willard. "Although I hate to deprive the fans of the chance to see a lot of fighting for their money, but I think they will be satisfied with what they have seen after I finish with Moran."

"Moran, people say, is a terrific puncher. I am glad of that. The thought that he can hit will make him fight all the better, and that is what I like. When I step into the ring I like to have a man stand up and battle. It makes the work so much more interesting, but I am afraid that Moran will not have much opportunity to test his punching powers after I get my left jab to working. You know my left is long, has a sting behind it and shoots out with a lot of speed. Moran may want to quit after a few punches reach home."

These are just a few of the battles in which White gave satisfaction. He has refereed about 3,500 fights.

THE selection of Charley White to referee the Willard-Moran match met with general approval. White has been identified with the boxing game for many years. He is both honest and capable. White has had much experience. He is the man who declared Young Corbett the champion featherweight over Terry McGovern. He was in the ring when "Mysterious" Billy Smith won the welterweight title from Joe Walcott. He refereed the famous championship fight of Jim Jeffries and Jim Corbett May 11, 1909. He called Joe Gans the champion in his twenty-two round bout with Frank Erne at Fort Erie.

He gave Ben Jordan, the Britisher, the international featherweight championship over George Dixon. He was the third man in the ring of Peter Maher and Gus Ruhlin. Fitzsimmons and Rubin, Fitzsimmons and Sharkey in their second meeting, Maher and Slavin and Maher and Goddard.

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